

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

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TAGS: PDEV PFOR EGEN HA

SUBJ: DUVALIER'S ANNUAL "STATE OF THE REPUBLIC" MESSAGE SOUNDS

OPTIMISTIC NOTES

1. SUMMARY. IN THE CUSTOMARY ANNUAL ADDRESS ON HAITI'S ANCESTORS' DAY (JAN 2), PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER TOOK A GENERALLY SELF-CONFIDENT LINE ON THE GOH'S MEASURES TO DEAL WITH HAITI'S SEVERE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY, UNDERDEVELOPMENT, AND OVERPOPULATION, PAYING DETAILED TRIBUTE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EVER-INCREASING FOREIGN ECONOMIC AID. ALTHOUGH TO DIFFUSE TO BE A PROGRAM DOCUMENT, THE SPEECH REFLECTS DUVALIER'S PRIORITIES, NOTABLY CLOSE HAITIAN RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, THE BRIDGING OF THE GAP BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, THE DEFENSE OF PEASANT FARMERS' INTERESTS, AND THE PURSUIT OF NATIONAL PRESTIGE (BUT COSTLY) PROJECTS LIKE THE NEW TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

2. DESPITE ITS OPTIMISTIC TONE, DUVALIER'S SPEECH DID NOT DISREGARD THE SEVERE PROBLEMS HAITI FACES. HE EMPHASIZED

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THE COMING POPULATION EXPLOSION, THE LONG NEGLECT OF GOVERNMENTAL

ATTENTION TO DEVELOPMENT AT THE COMMUNAL LEVEL, THE LARGE-SCALE "DISGUISED UNEMPLOYMENT" WHICH PREVAILS THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCES, AND THE CONTINUING NEED TO SAFEGUARD PEASANT FARMERS AGAINST ARBITRARY DISPOSSESSION OF THE LAND THEY WORK. UNREALISTICALLY, HOWEVER, HE GLOSSED OVER HAITI'S ACUTE CURRENT BALANCE-OF-PAYMENTS PROBLEM, POINTING TO LARGER INFLOWS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CAPITAL AS THE PRESUMPTIVE SOLUTION.

3. HE PAINTED A GENERALLY UP-BEAT PICTURE OF THE MEASURES THE GOH IS TAKING TO DEAL WITH THESE PROBLEMS, GIVEN THE CLIMATE OF PEACE, WORK, AND SOCIAL TRANQUILITY HE ASSUMES HAS BEEN ASSURED BY HIS FORM OF DUVALIERISM. IN HIS EXHAUSTIVE RECITATION OF PROJECTS, LARGE AND SMALL, HE POINTEDLY STRESSED THE LARGE ROLE PLAYED BY THE MULTI-FACETED FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WHICH HAS BURGEONED DURING HIS 4 1/2 YEAR-OLD REGIME. WITH PARDONABLE HYPERBOLE, HE EVOKED AN IMAGE OF HAITI AS A VAST OUTDOOR WORKSHOP (CHANTIER), RESOUNDING TO THE REASSURING NOTES OF MEN AND MACHINES AT WORK ON CONSTRUCTION.

4. HIS SECTION ON FOREIGN POLICY OFFERED NO SPECIAL NEW INSIGHTS, ALTHOUGH A JANUARY 7 NOUVEAU MONDE EDITORIAL COMMENTARY POINTED TO THE EVOLUTION OF HAITI'S POLICY TOWARD CUBA, AND SUGGESTED THAT, WITH IMPROVING ECONOMIC PROSPECTS, HAITI WOULD PURSUE A "DIPLOMACY OF PRESTIGE". AN ATTEMPT TO APPLY THE PRINCIPLE OF "SELF-DETERMINATION" TO SITUATIONS SUCH AS BELIZE, SPANISH SAHARA, AND ANGOLA DID NOT COME OFF WITH CLARITY AS TO JUST WHERE HAITI STANDS ON THOSE ISSUES. DUVALIER DID MAKE QUITE CLEAR, HOWEVER, WHERE HE PLACES HIS PRIORITIES IN WESTERN HEMISPHERE RELATIONS: NAMELY, CONSOLIDATION AND REINFORCEMENT OF HAITI'S IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND WITH THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. THE SPEECH WAS OCCASIONALLY LACED WITH STANDARD THIRD-WORLD RHETORIC ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, THOUGH NOT WITH ANY GREAT EMPHASIS.

5. THE SPEECH INCLUDED SOME LANGUAGE ON THE GOH'S PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT POLICY, BUT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN EDITED WITH SUFFICIENT CARE TO RENDER IT AN AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE. DUVALIER DID STRESS THAT THE TOP PRIORITIES IN THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR PLAN (1976-81) WOULD LIE IN THE FIELDS OF AGRICULTURE, DECENTRALIZED INDUSTRY, EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING. IN AN EARLIER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SECTION OF THE SPEECH, HOWEVER, HE APPEARED TO ACCORD TOP PRIORITY TO EDUCATION, THOUGH THE ENSUING ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS WAS HARDLY PERSUASIVE EVIDENCE.

6. THE SPEECH WAS INTERESTING FOR SOME OF THE POINTS WHICH ARE EVIDENTLY CLOSE TO DUVALIER'S HEART, TO JUDGE FROM THEIR FREQUENT REPETITION. ONE SUCH POINT WAS HIS PRINCIPLE THAT THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE A

BETTER HUMAN EQUILIBRIUM, BOTH AMONG SOCIAL CLASSES AND AMONG REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. ANOTHER WAS HIS PLEDGE TO PROTECT PEASANTS FROM DISPOSSESSION, OFTEN A SOURCE OF BITTER CONFLICT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, AND HIS IMPLICIT ATTACK ON OLD-GUARD DUVALIERISTS WHO PERPETRATED THESE ABUSES. HE LISTED AS A MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE PAST YEAR THE DISTINCTLY NATIONALISTIC AND PARTLY AMBIGUOUS LAW OF JUNE 1975 WHICH LIMITS OWNERSHIP AND USE OF LAND BY FOREIGNERS. NEAR HIS PERORATION, HE PLACED HEAVY STRESS ON THE MARVELOUS RESULTS TO BE EXPECTED FROM HIS COSTLY TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT, ADDING THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNDER WAY TOWARD A NATIONAL TELEVISION STATION. (NEEDLESS TO SAY, HE GAVE NO HINT OF THE PROBLEMS THIS PROJECT HAS CAUSED FOR THE NATIONAL BUDGET AND BALANCE OF PAYMENTS; NOR DID HE OFFER ANY WORD OF COMFORT FOR THE US-OWNED TELEVISION COMPANY.)

7. DUVALIER PROMISED TWO NEW PIECES OF LEGISLATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE FIRST, A COMPREHENSIVE DECREE ON NARCOTICS AND DRUG ABUSE, WAS PROMULGATED WITHIN A FEW DAYS (PORT AU PRINCE 85). THE OTHER WAS STATED TO BE A LAW TO "NORMALIZE" THE COUNTRY'S COMMERCIAL SYSTEM SO AS TO MEET TODAY'S REQUIREMENTS IN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN COMMERCE. IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THIS MEASURE WILL TAKE THE FORM OF A CODIFICATION RATHER THAN REPRESENT A RADICAL OR DISRUPTIVE EFFORT TO RESTRICT BUSINESS PRACTICES.

8. ONE COPY OF THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE SPEECH (IN FRENCH) HAS BEEN POUCHED TO ARA-LA/CAR.
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